

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) In an environment ~~of the type~~ having a building element and a mounting member, a quick connect assembly interconnecting the building element and the mounting member, the quick connect assembly comprising:

(a) a first locking member coupled to the building element or the mounting member, the first locking member having a first passageway extending through the first locking member;

(b) a second locking member coupled to the other of the building element or the mounting member, the second locking member having a second passageway extending through the second locking member, the first and second locking members having co-operative cam locking elements to reversibly couple the building element to the mounting member; and

(c) a first conduit and a second conduit disposed in fluid communication, the first conduit being disposed within a portion of the building element and the second conduit being disposed on a side of the mounting member opposite the first or second locking member, wherein the first and second conduits cooperatively define plumbing for transferring fluids between the mounting member and the building element, the plumbing extending from below the mounting member to within the building element and passing through the first and second passageways, wherein the plumbing includes a first fitting and a second fitting, wherein the first fitting is adapted to couple in fluid communication to the second fitting, wherein the first fitting is coupled to the plumbing disposed below the mounting member and the second fitting is coupled to the plumbing disposed within the building element.

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS[®] LLC
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

2. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the first and second locking members are adapted to reversibly couple to one another through a bayonet action.

3. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein when the first and second locking members are reversibly coupled to one another, the first and second passageways are substantially aligned with one another to permit services to pass between the mounting member and the building element through the first and second passageways.

4. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the first locking member includes a recess for receiving a seal for substantially sealing the first locking member to either the mounting member or the building element.

5. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the first locking member has an annular shaped body disposed about the first passageway.

6. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 5, wherein the co-operative cam locking elements include a protrusion extending from the annular shaped body and a cooperatively shaped structure disposed on the second locking member, and wherein the protrusion and the cooperatively shaped structure are engageable with one another to reversibly couple the first and second locking members to one another.

7. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 5, wherein at least a portion of the second locking member may be positioned within the first passageway of the first locking member.

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESSSM
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

8. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 7, wherein the co-operative cam locking elements include a protrusion disposed on the second locking member and a cooperatively shaped structure disposed on the first locking member such that when the portion of the second locking member is received within the first passageway and the locking members are reversibly coupled to one another, the cooperatively shaped structure of the first locking member overlaps the protrusion of the second locking member.

9. (Withdrawn) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein one of the locking members includes a distension and the other of the locking members includes a detent for receiving the distension when the locking members are reversibly coupled to one another to provide a selected amount of rotational resistance to impede relative rotation of the locking members.

10. (Currently amended) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein one of the locking members includes an alignment mechanism, wherein the alignment mechanism interfaces with a cooperatively shaped alignment device disposed on ~~either the building element or the mounting member~~ such that the locking member having the alignment mechanism is adapted to be coupled in a selected orientation relative to the building element or the mounting member having the alignment device.

11. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the locking members are rotated less than 360 degrees during the reversible coupling of the locking members.

12. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the co-operative cam locking elements include a cam disposed on each of the first and second locking members, and wherein the cams engage one another when the locking members are

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESSSM
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

reversibly coupled to one another such that the cam of the first locking member is sandwiched between the cam of the second locking member and the building element or the mounting member.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 14, wherein the first fitting is stationary relative to the second locking member and the second fitting is movable relative to the first fitting such that the second fitting may be longitudinally displaced from the first fitting.

16. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 15, wherein the second fitting is coupled to an extendable section of the plumbing, wherein a stationary end of the extendable section is stationary relative to the building element and a movable end of the extendable section of the plumbing is coupled to the second fitting such that the second fitting may be selectively displaced from the stationary end of the extendable section.

17. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 16, wherein the first fitting is coupled to the second locking member.

18. (Withdrawn) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the second locking member includes a limit stop, wherein the limit stop is located to engage the first locking member when the first and second locking members are reversibly coupled to one another to impede further rotation of the first and second locking members relative to one another in a selected direction.

19. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 1, wherein the first and second passageways and at least one of the locking members are hidden from view from a user viewing

an exterior surface of the building element when the locking members are reversibly coupled to one another.

20. (Currently amended) In an environment of the type having a building element and a mounting member, a quick connect assembly interconnecting the building element and the mounting member while permitting services to pass between the mounting member and the building element through the quick connect assembly, the quick connect assembly comprising:

(a) an interference member coupled to the building element or the mounting member, the interference member having a protrusion;

(b) a receiving member coupled to the other of the building element or the mounting member, the receiving member having an engagement member, wherein the interference member may be positioned in a first position such that the protrusion may be longitudinally moved past at least a portion of the receiving member, and a locked position in which the interference member has been rotated a predetermined angular displacement from the first position such that the protrusion engages the engagement member to interlock the building element to the mounting member; and

(c) a first conduit and a second conduit disposed in fluid communication, the first conduit being disposed within a portion of the building element and the second conduit being disposed on a side of the mounting member opposite the interference member or the receiving member, wherein the first and second conduits cooperatively define plumbing for transferring fluids between the mounting member and the building element, the plumbing extending from below the mounting member to within the building element and passing through the first and second passageways, wherein the plumbing includes a first fitting and a second

fitting, wherein the first fitting is adapted to couple in fluid communication to the second fitting, wherein the first fitting is coupled to the plumbing disposed below the mounting member and the second fitting is coupled to the plumbing disposed within the building element.

21. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein the interference member includes a recess for receiving a seal for substantially sealing the interference member to either the mounting member or the building element.

22. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein the interference member has an annular shaped body forming an open inner portion for permitting the first conduit to pass therethrough.

23. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 22, wherein the protrusion extends inward from the annular shaped body into the open inner portion.

24. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 22, wherein the receiving member may be at least partially positioned within the open inner portion.

25. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 24, wherein the engagement member extends outward from the receiving member such that when the receiving member is at least partially received within the open inner portion of the interference member and the interference member is in the locked position, the protrusion and engagement member overlap one another.

26. (Withdrawn) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein either the engagement member or the protrusion include a distension and the other of the engagement member or the protrusion includes a detent for receiving the distension when the interference

member is in the locked position to provide a selected amount of rotational resistance impeding the rotation of the interference and engagement members relative to one another.

27. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein the interference member or the receiving member includes an alignment mechanism, wherein the alignment mechanism interfaces with a cooperatively shaped alignment device disposed on either the building element or the mounting member such that the interference member or receiving member is oriented in a selected orientation relative to the building element or mounting member.

28. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein the predetermined angular displacement is less than 360 degrees.

29. (Original) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein the receiving member includes a passageway for permitting services to pass through the receiving member.

30. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein when the interference member is in the locked position, the protrusion is sandwiched between the engagement member and the building element or the mounting member.

31. (Previously presented) The quick connect assembly of Claim 20, wherein the receiving member is transitioned between the first position and the locked position by a bayonet action.

32. (Withdrawn) A connection assembly for connecting a building element to a surface and providing for services to pass between the surface and the building element, the connection assembly comprising:

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{LLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

(a) a building element having a cavity;
(b) a surface for supporting the building element;
(c) a quick connect assembly for coupling the building element to the surface, the quick connect assembly having a passageway passing through the quick connect assembly; and

(d) a conduit for transferring services between a location disposed below the surface and the building element, the conduit passing through the cavity and the passageway.

33. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 32, wherein the quick connect assembly includes:

(a) an interference member coupled to the building element or the surface, the interference member having a protrusion; and

(b) a receiving member coupled to the other of the building element or the surface, the receiving member having an engagement member, wherein the interference member may be positioned in a first position such that the protrusion may be longitudinally moved past at least a portion of the receiving member, and a locked position in which the interference member has been rotated a predetermined angular displacement from the first position such that the protrusion engages the engagement member to reversibly interlock the building element to the surface.

34. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 32, wherein the conduit includes an adjustable section adjustable in length associated with either the building element or the surface and a second section associated with the other of the building element or the surface.

35. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 34, wherein the second section remains substantially immobile relative to the building element or the surface it is associated with.

36. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 34, further including a coupling assembly having a first coupling member coupled to the adjustable section and a second coupling member coupled to the second section wherein the first and second coupling members are adapted to be coupled to one another to place the adjustable section in fluid communication with the second section.

37. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 36, wherein the first coupling member is rigidly coupled to either the building element or the surface as to remain substantially stationary relative to the building element or the surface to which it is coupled to, and wherein the second coupling member is coupled to the other of the building element or the surface such that the second coupling member is free to rotate and to be longitudinally displaced with respect to the building element or the surface of which it is associated with.

38. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 36, wherein the adjustable section is adjustable in length such that the first coupling member is positionable between an extended position in which at least a majority of the first coupling member is disposed outward of the building element or surface and a retracted position in which at least a majority of the first coupling member is spaced inward of the building element or surface, wherein the first coupling member is adapted to be placed in the extended position and coupled to the second coupling member while the building element is detached from the surface and wherein the first coupling

member is adapted to be placed in the retracted position when the building element is coupled to the surface.

39. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 38, further comprising a control device coupled to the building element and in communication with the adjustable section of the conduit, the control device adapted to regulate passage of services through the conduit, wherein the control device is coupled to the adjustable section prior to coupling of the building element with the surface, wherein the adjustable section may be manipulated to adjust a separation distance of the first coupling member from the control device to permit the first coupling member to be placed in the extended and retracted positions.

40. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 33, wherein the predetermined angular displacement is 360 degrees or less.

41. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 33, wherein the building element may be rotated without the use of tools the predetermined angular displacement.

42. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 33, wherein when the building element and the surface are coupled to one another, the conduit and the receiving member are substantially hidden from view.

43. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 33, wherein the receiving member includes a top surface having a clearance cut disposed therein for permitting the protrusion to pass longitudinally downward past the top surface, and wherein once the interference member has been rotated to the locked position, the top surface is disposed over the

protrusion to impede longitudinal movement of the interference member relative to the receiving member in at least one direction.

44. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 43, wherein the interference member includes an annular body having an open center portion, wherein the one protrusion extends inward into the open center.

45. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 44, wherein the receiving member is adapted to be at least partially received and rotated within the open center portion of the interference member.

46. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 33, further including an alignment member coupled to either the interference or receiving member, wherein the alignment member is adapted to cooperatively interact with a cooperatively formed alignment member disposed on the surface or the building element, wherein the alignment members are configured to cooperatively interact with one another only when the interference or receiving member having the alignment member is oriented at a selected angular displacement relative to the surface or building element having the cooperatively formed alignment member such that when the building element is coupled to the surface, the building element is oriented in a selected orientation relative to the surface.

47. (Withdrawn) A connection assembly for connecting a building element to a surface and providing for services to be transferred between the building element and the surface, the connection assembly comprising:

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{LLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

(a) a cam engaging portion and a complementary engaging portion which interact with each other in a quick connect manner from an unlocked connection to a locked connection;

(b) one of the engaging portions being coupled to the surface, and the other engaging portion positioned at an end of the building element to be attached to the surface; and

(c) the engaging portions being configured to allow for services to pass therethrough.

48. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 47, wherein when the building element is attached to the surface, the services and the cam engaging portion are substantially hidden from view.

49. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 47, wherein the engaging portions interact with one another in a bayonet type action.

50. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 47, wherein the building element is an internally pre-plumbed pillar for use in a shower or bath enclosure which is modified for attachment to a substantially finished surface.

51. (Withdrawn) An internally pre-plumbed pillar for coupling to a surface and passing service therebetween via a service conduit, the internally pre-plumbed pillar comprising:

(a) a body with a hollow interior for housing at least a portion of the service conduit, the body including at or near one end a terminated section of plumbing comprising an extendible length of pipe biased to retract within the body; and

(b) an engaging portion disposed at or near the one end of the body, the engaging portion complementary to a separate engaging portion fixable to the surface, wherein the engaging portions interact to securely connect the pillar to the surface, wherein both engaging portions include open sections allowing the service conduit to pass therethrough.

52. (Withdrawn) A connection assembly for use in attachment of a building element to a structure, the connection assembly allowing for passage of plumbing associated with the building element through the connection assembly, the connection assembly comprising;

(a) a cam portion able to be fixed to the structure to which the building element is to be attached; and

(b) a complementary portion which engages with the cam portion so as to restrict longitudinal separation of one from the other, wherein the complementary portion is either formed into the building element or is fixable thereto, and wherein the complementary portion and the cam portion each contain an aperture for allowing passage of the plumbing associated with the building element therethrough.

53. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 52, wherein the cam portion includes a plumbing connection for the connection of the plumbing associated with the building element thereto.

54. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 52, further comprising limit stops for restricting rotation of the cam portion relative to the annular portion past a selected angle.

55. (Withdrawn) The connection assembly of Claim 52, further including complementary quick connect plumbing connections provided on the cam portion and the plumbing associated with the building element.

56. (Withdrawn) A building element for use in a connection assembly, wherein the building element comprises:

(a) a hollow section disposed along at least part of a length of the building element; and

(b) an extendible plumbing extension portion further including:

(i) a movable section of pipe which can be extended from a retracted position wherein a distal end of the movable section of pipe is substantially within the hollow section of the building element to an extended position wherein the distal end is substantially outside of the hollow section of the building element; and

(ii) a plumbing connection coupled to the distal end, the plumbing connection adapted to allow connection of the plumbing connection to a complementary plumbing connection.

57. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 56, wherein the extendible plumbing extension portion comprises a retractable section of pipe which is biased to retract within the hollow section.

58. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 56, wherein the plumbing connection is rotatable relative to the movable section of pipe.

59. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 56, wherein the extendible plumbing extension portion comprises a flexible coil of pipe.

60. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 56, further including one or more nozzles coupled in fluid communication with the extendable plumbing extension portion for discharging a fluid from the building element.

61. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 60, wherein the one or more nozzles are pre-plumbed to the building element so as to be in fluid communication with the extendable plumbing extension portion.

62. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 60, further including an engagement portion coupled to the building element, the engagement portion adapted to couple to a cam portion disposed on a surface to interlock the building element to the surface.

63. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 62, wherein the cam portion comprises a disc shaped portion, and wherein sections of the disc shaped portion are open to permit the engagement portion to move past the open sections.

64. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 63, wherein the disc shaped portion of the cam portion is disposed above the surface to which the cam portion is attached.

65. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 63, wherein the engagement portion includes raised elements to assist in aligning the building element relative to the engagement portion.

66. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 63, wherein the cam portion includes a pipe connection attached to or integrated with the cam portion.

67. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 63, wherein the cam portion includes rotation resisting means for interacting with features on the engagement portion to resist rotation of the engagement portion relative to the cam portion.

68. (Withdrawn) The building element of Claim 67, wherein the resisting means comprises a resisting device selected from the group consisting of a ratchet type arrangement, a full locking arrangement, and a detent arrangement.

69. (Withdrawn) A method of coupling a building element to a surface comprising:

(a) coupling to an attachment end of the building element a first engaging portion;

(b) attaching on the surface a second engaging portion which is configured to engage the first engaging portion to reversibly couple the building element to the surface in a bayonet type manner; and

(c) installing a service conduit for passing a service between the building element from a point below the surface to a point within the building element, wherein the service conduit passes through the first and second engaging portions such that the service conduit is hidden from view when the building element is reversibly coupled to the surface.

70. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 69, wherein one of the engaging portions includes a cam portion and the other engaging portion includes a complementary portion.

71. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 70, wherein the cam portion comprises a disc portion having at least one engaging portion of which the complementary portion interacts.

72. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 70, wherein the cam portion includes a plumbing connection to which the service conduit may be connected.

73. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 70, wherein the cam portion includes an alignment provision for allowing the cam portion to be affixed to the surface or the building element in a selected orientation.

74. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 70, wherein the cam portion includes an aperture through which the service conduit may pass.

75. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 69, wherein the surface is selected from the group consisting of: a floor, a shower receptor, a bath tub, a partial wall structure, a wall, a surround, a horizontal support surface, an inclined support surface, and a vertical support surface.

76. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 69, wherein the building element, after being reversibly coupled to the surface, is in a substantially vertical position.

77. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 69, wherein the building element houses plumbing, and wherein the plumbing is modified such that at an end of the plumbing closest to the end of the building element being attached to the surface is movable so as to be able to be temporarily withdrawn from the end of the building element to allow attachment to a plumbing connection.

78. (Withdrawn) A method for attaching a building element forming part of a shower assembly to a support surface, said method including:

(a) fixing a first engaging portion and a plumbing connection to the support surface;

(b) connecting a complementary second engaging portion to one end of the building element;

(c) installing plumbing within the building element with an end portion moveable outward from the building element to allow for connection of the plumbing to the plumbing connection fixed to the surface;

(d) bringing the end of the building element into proximity with the first engaging portion and connecting the end portion of the plumbing to the plumbing connection; and

(e) coupling the first and second engaging portions to one another in a quick to connect manner to couple the building element to the surface.

79. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 78, wherein the first and second engaging portions engage one another in a bayonet type manner.

80. (Withdrawn) A method for attaching a building element of a shower assembly to a support surface, the building element housing plumbing, said method including:

(a) fixing a first engaging portion to the support surface;

(b) fixing a first plumbing connection to the support surface;

(c) attaching a complementary second engaging portion capable of interlocking with the first engaging portion on the building element;

(d) providing the plumbing within the building element with an end portion which is substantially rigid and fixing a second plumbing connection to the end portion;

(e) positioning the second engaging portion of the building element over the first engaging portion coupled to the support surface; and

(f) interlocking the first engaging portion with the second engaging portion, wherein the interlocking of the engaging portions also results in connection of the first and second plumbing connections to one another.

81. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 80, further including aligning a provision of the cam portion with a complimentary provision associated with the surface, wherein alignment of the provisions permits the building element to be oriented in a selected orientation relative to the surface when the building element is attached to the surface.

82. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 80, wherein the building element is substantially a hollow member.

83. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 80, wherein the interlocking of the engaging portions results in connection of the first and second plumbing connections to one another in a quick connect type arrangement.

84. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 80, wherein the building element is rotated less than 360 degrees when interlocking the first engaging portion with the second engaging portion.

85. (Withdrawn) A method of installing a shower enclosure which includes one or more building elements, wherein the building elements house plumbing associated with the enclosure, and wherein the building elements are coupled to a base structure, said method including:

(a) positioning and fixing to the base structure a cam portion for attaching the building element to the base structure;

(b) bringing an end of the building element into proximity to the cam portion and connecting the plumbing housed within the building element to a plumbing connection associated with the base structure, and

(c) affixing the building element to the cam portion by engagement of a complementary engaging portion present at the end of the building element with the cam portion.

86. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 85, wherein the base structure is substantially finished prior to the positioning and fixing of the cam portion upon the base structure.

87. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 85, wherein a floor of a building forms the base structure for the shower enclosure, the method further including positioning of a waste pipe and additional plumbing in the floor and terminating the waste pipe and the additional plumbing substantially flush with the floor.

88. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 87, wherein the additional plumbing is routed through the cam portion to be connected to the plumbing disposed within the building element.

89. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 85 in which the plumbing associated with the building element, the additional plumbing associated with the floor, and the cam portion are substantially hidden from view after the building element has been affixed to the cam portion.